CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on
Thursday, 10 August 1995, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Shirchinjavyn Yumjav (Mongolia)

GE.95-63435 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 713th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers the representative of Pakistan, who will speak in his capacity as coordinator of the Group of 21, as well as the representatives of France and Australia. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, before I turn to the statement that I have been entrusted to make as the Coordinator of the Group of 21, let me take this opportunity to express to you my warmest felicitations on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference. We are confident that you will be able to make a signal contribution to our work at this very critical juncture in the affairs of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador of Mexico, for the valiant efforts that he made in trying to resolve the problems being faced by the Conference on Disarmament with regard to the organization of its work. He tried heroically and he almost succeeded, and we hope that his work will continue to contribute to the eventual success of our Conference. Finally, it is also my pleasure to express a warm welcome to the new Ambassador of India, Ambassador Arundhati Ghose, who, we are confident, will make an outstanding contribution to the work of this Conference.

I have been entrusted by the Group of 21 to make the following statement on the draft resolution circulated by Argentina in the United Nations Security Council, document S/1995/567.

The G-21 takes note of the draft resolution circulated to members of the Security Council regarding the proposed role for the Security Council on the question of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The G-21 notes with concern that the draft resolution is silent on the vertical proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, on nuclear disarmament and on the continued existence and retention of nuclear weapons by the five nuclear-weapon States. In the Group's view, the huge nuclear-weapons stockpiles in the possession of the nuclear-weapons States, continuing qualitative improvements to nuclear-weapons systems and the development and production of new nuclear weapons must constitute a priority in the field of multilateral disarmament since these represent a grave danger to international peace and security. It is this issue which should be of special concern to the Security Council, in view of the overwhelming demand for the elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, recognized and voiced in various United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

The Group believes that non-proliferation in all its aspects can be best promoted through the adoption and implementation of a legally binding, multilaterally negotiated treaty for elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. It is high time that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) commenced negotiations on such a treaty. This would be consistent with the biological and chemical weapons conventions which aim to eliminate respective categories of weapons of mass destruction entirely.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

Any deviation from the role envisaged for the Security Council under the United Nations Charter or in certain circumstances under multilateral treaties on non-proliferation and disarmament would undermine the provisions of these treaties and conventions, including the inherent mechanisms for securing redress for the violations of their provisions. It would also call into question the value of painstaking multilateral negotiations on disarmament and arms control treaties in the Conference on Disarmament.

In this context, the Group reiterates its position that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament issues. Circumventing the Conference on Disarmament or undermining the provisions of the existing treaties will seriously prejudice the ongoing negotiations in the CD on the CTBT and other issues.

I would request that this statement may be circulated as an official document of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of France, Ambassador Errera.

Mr. ERRERA (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all I should like to welcome your accession to the office of President of our Conference at a particularly critical time in our work. It goes without saying that you may rely on the full support of my delegation. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Mexico, for the talent, persistence and courage with which he led our deliberations. Finally, I would like to welcome our new colleagues, the Ambassador of South Africa, the Ambassador of India and the Ambassador of Peru.

On 13 June 1995, when the President of the Republic announced the resumption of a final series of nuclear tests, he made a solemn commitment that France would sign the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty in the autumn of 1996. This is the main goal. Let us not lose sight of it. It means firstly, that we are firmly looking to a halt to nuclear testing in the very near future - before the end of May 1996 as far as we are concerned, before the end of 1996 for all countries. We must honour the commitment which, like all the States parties to the NPT, we assumed in New York on 11 May 1995 in adopting the "Declaration on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament". This applies above all to the five nuclear-weapon States, which must shoulder their responsibilities.

It also means that the cessation of nuclear testing that we contemplate will be final. This is why France expressed clear support for a treaty of unlimited duration on 29 June 1995.

Lastly, it means that the future treaty will provide for a comprehensive ban on testing. The President of the Republic made this very clear on 14 July.

(Mr. Errera, France)

This is the framework within which we will now be compelled, like the other nuclear Powers, to ensure the safety and the reliability of our weapons. This means that the French nuclear forces will continue to rely on the same doctrine of deterrence, the same concept of strict sufficiency and thus the same weapon systems. To put it clearly, France has no intention of designing new types of weapons, or increasing the number or power of existing weapons, or developing miniaturized weapons, or modifying the role of nuclear weapons in our defence doctrine. It also means that it cannot be claimed, as we sometimes hear, that the resumption of French nuclear testing would harm our negotiations. The opposite is true. France is determined to spare no effort to ensure that the objective of the signature of a comprehensive test-ban treaty next autumn can be reached. The President of the Republic is committed to it. It will be done.

In order to achieve this goal, the negotiations must take a new course. There is an urgent need for the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban to fulfil the mandate that was assigned to it: the conclusion of a universal and internationally verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. In concrete terms this means that in the coming weeks agreement should be reached on a number of crucial points. Firstly, with regard to the verification regime, it is time to formalize the broad agreement on the components of the international monitoring system and turn to the best possible account the remarkable work accomplished under the guidance of Dr. Peter Marshall over the past 18 months. France will in particular seek to ensure that, without claiming to be perfect, the regime to be established is effective and makes the best possible use of the means available, and that its constraints are applied in an equitable manner. As regards the architecture of the future organization entrusted with the implementation of the treaty, now that the outlines of the verification regime appear more clearly, here too the time has come to decide among the various options. Finally, as for the very heart of the future treaty - the scope of the ban - the President of the Republic has expressed France's resolve to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The proposal to prohibit "any nuclear-weapon test or any other nuclear explosion" corresponds to this aim. France has decided to adopt this formulation.

Since the beginning of these negotiations France has always stated in a straightforward manner the constraints to which it was subject, its responsibilities and its objectives. We have always unambiguously held that the treaty we are negotiating would be a treaty prohibiting nuclear tests and not a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. We have never concealed that our active involvement in these negotiations was compatible with a possible resumption of our testing. From the outset, when we took this decision, we set forth with the utmost transparency the reasons for which we were resuming these tests. Likewise, everyone knows that in entering these negotiations we accepted the prospect of a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. Today no one should doubt our determination to honour our commitment. Everyone should be convinced of France's resolve to move the negotiations forward. This is ultimately what the international community expects from us.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Starr.

Mr. STARR (Australia): Mr. President, allow me also to congratulate you on your assumption of this position and assure you of the cooperation of my delegation in the difficult task ahead of us. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues.

I asked for the floor today to make a statement on the acceleration of the negotiations and the importance of this Conference adhering to the strong expectations of our concluding the CTBT negotiations in 1996.

In a statement today in Australia, the Prime Minister of Australia said that an international agreement to a binding and genuinely comprehensive CTBT no later than 1996 is a central policy aim of the Australian Government. Such an agreement would be a major boost to international security and to our goal of the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. In this context, I can welcome the positive elements in the statement by the Ambassador of France. I must reiterate, however, Australia's firm opposition to nuclear testing. We have expressed firm opposition in this body to continued testing by China. We have opposed the French decision to resume testing. We press for a reversal of those policies and for an immediate end to testing and the maintenance of moratoriums while a CTBT is negotiated and brought into force.

The Ambassador of France said that we are definitely facing a halt to nuclear testing. My delegation believes that the only way to ensure that that is the case is by the earliest possible conclusion of a test-ban treaty, and in that regard I would like to turn to the statement that I had prepared for today.

As we are all well aware, the firm expectation of the international community, expressed earlier this year, is that the CTBT should be concluded as soon as possible, but no later than 1996. This was in itself a welcome and considerable advance in precision on late 1994 consensus language which could only muster sufficient enthusiasm for a conclusion "without delay", and I quote the 1994 resolution.

As has been recognized since then, however, the 1996 target is of itself not sufficiently precise as a guide to achievement. Fortunately, we already have significant statements pointing in the direction of greater precision, in recognition of the realities of next year's international calendar. In this context, Australia believes the commitment of President Chirac of France to sign a CTBT by the northern autumn has been particularly important. To add further precision, it is Australia's firm view that our goal should be signature of the CTBT before the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Without doubt, international endorsement of a CTBT text as one of the final acts of the historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly would be a powerful symbol of our collective determination to [illegible] the nuclear

(Mr. Starr, Australia

shadow under which the United Nations itself was created, and of our determination to achieve the safer world envisaged when we decided on the indefinite extension of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty.

But stated commitment to a target date, even combined with steady work in the Conference, will not ensure the achievement of our objective, and in making this comment let me say I have no intention of detracting from the highly commendable work of our chairmen who are putting forward every effort to achieve results. Clearly, however, a structured process and a thorough awareness of steps necessary to conclude our negotiations are required if we are to meet the target. We cannot rely on ritual acknowledgement of a date and some miracle of osmosis to bring the negotiations to fruition, though I fear we often seem to work under that delusion.

Working back then from the target date of signature of the CTBT by UNGA51, it quickly becomes evident that our negotiations in Geneva will have to be concluded by mid-1996 to allow sufficient time for resumed consideration by UNGA50, as well as preparations for the signing ceremony as soon as possible thereafter. On the basis of experience with the chemical weapons Convention, 10-12 weeks will be needed for these steps.

Conclusion of the negotiations by mid-1996 presumes, in turn, that from the start of our 1996 session the CTBT negotiations must move decisively into an end-game phase. This has immediate implications for delegations around this table, since the remaining six weeks of the 1995 session will be crucial in preparing for this last phase of the negotiations. In Australia's view, and obviously in the view of the delegation of France, there is a series of issues which form prerequisites for an end-game and thus should comprise the focus of our efforts for the remainder of this session.

Obviously convergence on scope is a fundamental requirement if we are to reach a conclusion to the negotiations in line with our commitments. The range of views on this issue is now in many cases a matter of public record. Australia sees the focus of the CTBT as to ban nuclear explosions. We see the CTBT as an essential and urgent component in a series of arms control measures designed to move towards the ultimate goal of universal nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Accordingly, I have to say that we still believe some delegations are advocating an over-extension of the scope of the treaty through an attempt, that is not feasible in our view, to cover wide-ranging nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals; other reported approaches, by contrast, would have the effect of undermining the concept of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

It is not credible for us to talk in terms of a serious effort to discharge the international negotiating responsibilities of this forum by 1996 if we are unable to show significant progress towards consensus on clear and simple scope language. Australia's working paper 222, which we note attracts increasing support, was designed to meet, in the most streamlined and unambiguous manner possible, the precise mandate of the nuclear test ban Ad Hoc Committee.

(Mr. Starr, Australia)

We urge all delegations, which have not yet been able to join in endorsing such a formulation, to redouble efforts in this regard before the end of this session, and we urge the nuclear-weapon States in particular to contribute to the elaboration of an agreement on scope which is consistent with, and moreover reinforces the objective of a comprehensive ban. In this context, the statement by the Ambassador of France has obvious and immediate relevance.

It I might turn next to verification, which we too believe is a prerequisite area, convergence on key verification issues is essential in this final part of the 1995 session. We must find orderly and efficient ways of defining that technical detail which we decide must be reflected in the treaty and its protocol, while identifying lower-level detail which should fall to a preparatory commission to resolve.

There is much still to be done in verification in order to bring this section of the treaty text up to the same level of development as we now have for legal and institutional issues. We are well on the way to achieving this however, and the improvements to the verification text resulting from the second part of the session have been appreciable. We welcome the decision of the Ad Hoc Committee to allocate additional negotiating time in the third part of the session to verification.

Of course all final technical details do not need to be agreed this year but my delegation considers it will be necessary by January 1996 to have a clear convergence, reflected in treaty text, on: firstly, the international monitoring system as a concept, and its component elements (including agreement on the major aspects of IMS architecture, and on the nature of data-processing by the international data centre); then funding of the organization (in particular, funding of the monitoring system and verification activities); and, finally, a single concept for the development of on-site inspection.

There are obvious interrelationships here, particularly in the work on the monitoring system. Agreement on funding arrangements and on the IMS data-processing concept will clearly make final agreement on IMS architecture much easier to achieve. In this context, I wish to acknowledge the highly significant flexibility shown yesterday by the United States on funding issues which we believe will significantly aid delegations in coming to concrete agreement on IMS architecture in the next fortnight.

Without significant progress here - both conceptually and in text - it would be exceedingly difficult to convince the international community that we are making a serious effort to bring home the treaty in line with commitments and expectations. On a practical level, it would also be difficult to launch a productive and credible end-game in January 1996 if so many loose threads remain affecting verification issues. Welcome movement on funding will be a big step forward.

(Mr. Starr, Australia)

A third prerequisite in our view for the end-game phase is further streamlining of the, as yet, heavily bracketed rolling text. By necessity, this will involve deletion of aspects which are found to be duplicative, or otherwise extraneous. In this context, Australia continues to see no place in the treaty for provisions on so-called peaceful nuclear explosions or on security assurances for States parties. In the case of the first issue - PNEs - our concerns were set out in detail in my plenary statement in June. In the case of security assurances, while supportive of continuing international attention to that issue we do not believe that a Committee mandated specifically to draft a comprehensive test ban treaty is the appropriate place in which to address it.

Our fourth candidate issue for urgent attention is that of organization. Some delegations have argued up until now that discussion of the relationship between the organization and other international institutions was premature and largely dependent on progress in Working Group 1. While this argument may have held some weight in the past, it is in our view no longer valid. We now have agreement on the basic elements of the verification system, which should enable a decision at least on the **principle** of the relationship. We should now move promptly to examine its technical and financial aspects.

For Australia's part, we continue to believe that the CTBT organization should be co-located with, but independent from the International Atomic Energy Agency. This would enable savings to be derived in the start-up and running costs of the organization, in the area of accommodation, and in the general administration of the technical secretariat which could be provided by IAEA on a "user pays" basis. Common servicing should not, in our view, be extended to the technical aspects of verification, although where relevant IAEA technical expertise were identified, it could be utilized by the CTBT organization on a contractual basis as the need arose.

The logical consequence of our position is that Australia supports, in principle, Austria's offer to host the seat of the CTBT organization in Vienna. I suggest we now need detail from Austria about its offer, in particular, confirmation that a CTBT organization based in Vienna will have access to international telecommunications tariffs equal to the best available in the world, in order that transmission of large amounts of verification data be cost-effective. We look forward to early discussions with Austrian representatives.

A considerable degree of convergence on the above issues represents, in my delegation's view, the minimum necessary to facilitate the

Mr. Starr, Australia

(The President)

The secretariat has circulated, at my request, a timetable of meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies for next week. The timetable was prepared in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. It is, as usual, tentative and subject to change if necessary. On this understanding, may I suggest that the Conference adopts it?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 17 August 1995 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.